

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 123097

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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

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S E C R E T STATE 123097

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MASS, SA, IS, US

SUBJECT: SALE OF F-4 S TO SAUDI ARABIA: GOI NOTE OF JUNE 22

1. FOLLOWING IS TELEGRAPHIC TEXT SUBSTANTIVE PARAGRAPHS OF
DIPLOMATIC NOTE DELIVERED JUNE 22 TO DEP SECRETARY BY ISRAE-
LI AMBASSADOR DINITZ (SUBSTANCE MEETING BEING REPORTED
SEPTTEL):

QUOTE U. S. INTEREST IN STABILITY OF PERSIAN GULF REGION AND
ITS DESIRE TO ENABLE ITS FRIENDS IN AREA TO DEFEND THEM-
SELVES AND TO PROTECT CONTINUED AVAILABILITY OF THEIR OIL
RESOURCES ARE UNDERSTOOD.

QUOTE NEVERTHELESS, IT IS SUBMITTED THAT DANGERS INVOLVED
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PAGE 02 STATE 123097

IN PLACING PHANTOM AIRCRAFT AT DISPOSAL OF ARAB STATES OUT-WEIGH OSTENSIBLE ADVANTAGES. MAIN DANGER LIES IN TEMPTATION USE THESE AIRCRAFT IN CONTEXT ARAB- ISRAEL CONFLICT RATHER THAN AS ELEMENT IN PERSIAN GULF STABILITY. IF SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT HAVE SO FAR BEEN ONLY marginally INVOLVED IN MILITARY ASPECTS OF CONFLICT THAT PARTLY BECAUSE THEY LACK TECHNICAL POSSIBILITY OF REACHING THIS AREA AND CAN CONVINCINGLY PLEAD THIS INCAPACITY WHEN PRESSED BY MORE RADICAL ARAB GOVERNMENTS. WITH PHANTOMS THEY WOULD BE DEPRIVED OF EASY POSSIBILITY OF EVASION. THEY ALREADY UNDER PRESSURE FROM RADICAL QUARTERS; IF THEY HAVE PHANTOMS THEY WILL BE PRESSED TO TRANSFER THEM TO COUNTRIES ACTIVELY

ENGAGED IN CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL. ASST SEC SISCO HAS ADMITTED, IN RESPONSE TO CONGRESSIONAL QUERIES, THAT THIS CONTINGENCY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED. ALTERNATIVELY SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT MAY BE URGED JOIN THOSE COUNTRIES IN CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL SINCE PHANTOM AIRCRAFT EASILY CAPABLE OF REACHING ISRAEL TARGETS FROM SAUDI ARABIAN BASES. PROPOSED NUMBER AIRCRAFT TO BE DELIVERED TO SAUDI ARABIA WOULD DOUBLE THAT COUNTRY'S AIR FORCE. MOREOVER, DELIVERY OF PHANTOM AIRCRAFT TO ARAB COUNTRIES LIKELY BE INTERPRETED IN ARAB WORLD AS SYMBOLIZING BEGINNING OF NEW AMERICAN POLICY AND WOULD THUS PSYCHOLOGICALLY INHIBIT PROGRESS TOWARDS NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

QUOTE MILITARY AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF ISRAEL'S CONCERN ARE INTERTWINED. ONCE U. S. TAKES FAR- REACHING STEPS NOW CONTEMPLATED, OTHER SUPPLIERS OF ARMS, SUCH AS FRANCE AND SOVIET UNION, LIKELY TO INCREASE OWN ARMS SHIPMENTS TO OTHER ARAB STATES, AND TO ESCALATE THEM IN TERMS OF QUALITY AND SOPHISTICATION.

QUOTE IN LAST THREE YEARS, DESPITE ISRAEL DISAPPOINTMENT AT REFUSAL OF ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO NEGOTIATE, SOME PROMISING TRENDS HAVE BEEN SEEN AT WORK. AS RESULT IMAGINATIVE U. S. INITIATIVES, CEASE- FIRE WAS ESTABLISHED AND, THANKS TO U. S. GOVERNMENT'S ACTION TO MAINTAIN MILITARY BALANCE, THIS OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN SECURED. SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM EGYPT. JORDAN HAS OVERCOME GRAVE INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES. LEBANON HAS ACTED WITH SOME MEASURE
SECRET

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PAGE 03 STATE 123097

OF SUCCESS TO CURB ATTACKS ON ITS SOVEREIGNTY. TO DEGREE THAT WAR OPTION CLEARLY BLOCKED PACIFIC SETTLEMENT IS BROUGHT NEARER. APPEARANCE PHANTOM AIRCRAFT IN ARAB ARSENALS, WITH ALL THEIR SYMBOLIC AND MILITARY POTENCY, WILL WORK AGAINST THIS PROCESS.

QUOTE IN LIGHT APPREHENSIONS BEARING ON ISRAEL'S SECURITY

AND IN TRADITIONAL SPIRIT FRIENDLY COOPERATION BETWEEN U. S.
AND ISRAEL, GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL WISHES EXPRESS HOPE THAT
INTENTION SELL PHANTOM AIRCRAFT TO SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT
MAY YET BE RECONSIDERED. ENDQUOTE
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